



Feed the Future Country Fact Sheet

Online Version: <https://www.feedthefuture.gov/article/kenya%E2%80%99s-smallholder-dairy-farmers-invest-hydroponic-technology>

Kenya's Smallholder Dairy Farmers Invest in Hydroponic Technology



Beverly Shitandi/USAID Kenya

Rose Chelang'at received training to use hydroponic farming technology.

Rose Chelang'at decided to take up hydroponics farming at her dairy farm in Kericho County, Kenya after receiving training by a representative from Hydroponics Kenya, a local company that helps smallholders use innovative technology to grow food. The company was referred to her by the East Africa Market Development Associates, a partner of the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) as part of its Feed the Future-supported programming in Kenya.

Hydroponics is the process of growing crops, including fodder for livestock, without the use of soil. The technology, which is gaining ground quickly in Kenya, speeds up growth while eliminating soil-borne diseases, such as aflatoxin. Under Feed the Future, USAID is on the forefront of this trend, encouraging hydroponics farming to ensure more nutrition for farmers' livestock, which will increase milk production and raise incomes.

After the training, Chelang'at invested approximately \$113 to purchase the required material and embark on a new technology journey.

"Two of my dairy cows now produce four more liters per day, increasing their daily milk production from 11 to 15 liters. I get an additional 12 liters per day from my third cow," Chelang'at reported after introducing the hydroponically grown fodder into the diet of her herd.

Hydroponic farming is a new concept to Kenyan smallholder farmers, who are taking it up as they come to recognize its affordability and suitability for small-scale farming. Youth are becoming more receptive to the technology as well, as it is a major boost to the dairy sector and has created job opportunities along the value chain for youth who are now creating aluminum trays for sale to local farmers.

Technology transfer is an important method under Feed the Future to get affordable, effective technologies into the hands of smallholder farmers around the world. In Kenya, USAID is supporting the dissemination of nine new agricultural technologies and management practices at different phases of development. As an exciting new way to increase animal fodder and dairy production, hydroponic farming is a bright spot in Kenya's agricultural future.